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CHALLENGE

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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PLP'ers Lead Confrontation vs. Racist Minutemen; Upstage Liberals

MAYWOOD, CA., Aug. 27 — The cry "Queremos un mundo sin fronteras" ("We want a world without borders") rang out as hundreds confronted the racist Minutemen when they appeared in a nearby town whose residents are overwhelmingly working-class Latinos. The racist group's intent, protected by the cops, was to "punish" the small city for a recent declaration made by its liberal mayor that his town should be seen as a "sanctuary" for immigrants.

A protest countering the Minutemen drew several hundred community residents. The mayor decided to stage an event at a nearby local church, to take place at the same time as the protest, calling for "peace and unity" and encouraging residents to register to vote.

PLP helped lead the fight against the racists, sparking anti-racist chants and sharing our bullhorn with residents who were clearly outraged at the Minutemen. When some Minutemen tried to break through the crowd of anti-racists, PLP led the charge in confronting the racists.

To keep workers from militantly protesting, liberals tried to lure residents to the mayor's church event, a "Citizenship Fair." A priest from there showed up at the anti-racist protest chanting "unity, unity…" in Spanish, calling on demonstrators to go back to the church.

A group of youth who apparently had come from playing soccer seemed unsure of what to do. A PLP comrade confronted the priest, declaring that we needed to militantly confront the Minutemen. The soccer players decided to stay. A group of students chanted, "No basta resar, hay que luchar!" ("It's not enough to pray; we have to fight!"). Most of crowd took up the chant. The priest, having failed, left.

Eventually, the mayor himself appeared with a huge sound system to appeal to the protestors. Once again a comrade confronted him with a speech about how liberal members of the ruling class promise citizenship in exchange for an indentured servitude-type "guest worker" program and loyalty to the U.S. imperial agenda.

A student cited the importance of confronting the racists on our streets and not being fooled by liberal immigration "reforms" that Democrats, unions, and churches propose as solutions. These "reforms" aim to swell the military's ranks with immigrant youth for U.S. imperialism's future oil wars, while also creating a vast pool of loyal slave labor for the bosses' factories. Many booed the mayor; others waved at him to leave.

Some nationalists raised the Mexican flag on the Post Office flagpole, trying to raise a cheer. A comrade noted that the Mexican flag represents racism, exploitation and capitalism. Some anti-racists attacked the flag-raising as support for the murderous Mexican government. Behind the chant, "Abajo Banderas, Afuera Fronteras!" ("Down with Flags, Away with Borders!"), workers and students fought these nationalist ideas, saying that workers only need the red flag of the international working class.

A small group of Mexican nationalists attacked that chant and tried to

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Imperialists' Fierce Rivalry Leading to: World War III

"Combustible fault lines [that] could trigger a third World War" are deepening throughout the Middle East warns Richard Holbrooke, a leading liberal U.S. strategist. (Council on Foreign Relations — CFR — website, 8/31) Regional feuds embroiling Syria and Lebanon, Lebanon and Israel, Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan and Afghanistan and Pakistan could spark global conflict "like Serbian Gavrilo Princip's bullet in 1914," says Holbrooke. [The trigger for World War I]

THE DIALECTICS OF NECESSITY AND CHANCE

A devoted servant of U.S. imperialism, Holbrooke helped plan Kennedy's and Johnson's Vietnam genocide and Clinton's bombing of Bosnia and Kosovo. But this dyed-in-the-wool capitalist, who once ran Wall Street's Lehman Brothers investment house, unwittingly provides a Marxist dialectics lesson on necessity and chance. In this case, the necessity is that, to maximize profits, various sets of capitalists organized as nations must compete for the world's resources, markets and labor. This competition, as Lenin pointed out, inevitably leads to war, eventually to world war. "Chance" represents the many different possibilities for war. The U.S. is on one collision course with China over oil and on another with Russia over dominance in Europe. We can't predict precisely when, how, or where WW III will erupt. Its form and timing depend on a host of contingencies. We can, however, examine the forces at play and identify possible flashpoints.

IRAN NOW CHIEF REGIONAL THREAT TO U.S. OIL CONTROL

The U.S. vs. China and the U.S. vs. an alliance of Russia and Europe appear the most likely scenarios. All these bosses have vast military potential and increasingly clashing geopolitical interests. Fault lines are emerging in the Middle East, where the U.S. has an inexorable need to maintain a chokehold on oil supplies. As far back as 1992, Bernard Lewis, a Princeton-based "adviser to presidents," wrote that the U.S.'s main strategic goal was "to prevent the emergence...of a single regional power that could dominate the area and thus establish monopolistic control of Middle Eastern oil." (Foreign Affairs; Fall, 1992). The U.S. invaded Iraq twice when Saddam Hussein threatened to become the dominant local power in the Persian Gulf. Now the chief regional threat comes from Iran, which has close ties to both China and Russia. China, with its rampant energy thirst, has negotiated multi-billion-dollar gas deals with Iran. Russia is boosting Iran's anti-U.S. influence by helping build its nuclear reactors, thus greasing its weapons program.

To the benefit of China and Russia, Iran is winning prestige well beyond its borders. Iranian-backed Hezbollah fundamentalists — another group of aspiring bosses — hold sway over much of Lebanon, after the bloody Israeli-U.S. attempt to crush them failed. As for Iraq, because of Bush's bungled occupation, "Iran has now superseded the U.S. as the most influential power there." (Chatham House, August 2006) Saudi Arabia, home to the world's greatest oil reserves, is also becoming a hot spot in the rivalry. China gets most of its oil imports from Saudi Arabia, which has long been the private preserve of U.S. companies. For now, Saudi crude reaches China without U.S. Navy interference. But tensions will soon heighten when China launches its own blue-water fleet.

RUSSIA-EUROPE ALLIANCE BLOSSOMING

Bosses in Western Europe are rapidly tilting away from the U.S. In keeping with Putin's policy of strategic business deals, Russia just bought a big chunk of European arms giant EADS, which owns Boeing-Lockheed rival Airbus. The Times of London (8/30) understatedly cautions, "The prospect of a Russian state interest in Europe's biggest aerospace group may make the Pentagon pause before placing orders. Russia is no longer a Cold War adversary, but neither is it seen as a wholly reliable or benign ally....Russia still presents a formidable challenge to the West: its arms sales to the developing world are huge and of crucial importance in volatile areas such as the Middle East."

In the energy sector, "Europe is clamouring to become ever more dependent on Russian gas. A new pipeline will run from close to St. Petersburg along the Baltic seabed to Germany." (London Times, 9/3) Defying U.S. interests, France hopes to become China's top fuel broker. The French firm Total holds contracts to develop Iran's enormous South Pars oil and gas fields.

IMPERIALISTS WILL START WORLD WAR III....

All the conditions for World War III are not yet in place. China's and Russia's outmoded militaries are at the moment no match for the U.S. war machine. But an infusion of European technology could quickly change that equation. We cannot pinpoint the act of war, as CFR planner Ted Carpenter did in "America's Coming War with China" ("a Chinese submarine attack" on a U.S.

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PATCO Firings Marked Massive AFL-CIO Scabbing

August 5, 1981, marked somewhat of a turning point in the modern U.S. labor movement. On that day President Ronald Reagan fired 11,355 air controllers who had struck two days earlier and defied his 48-hour back-to-work ultimatum. The workers, members of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), driven by inhuman hours and working conditions, were demanding shorter hours, increased work staff and wage hikes. Ironically, PATCO was one of only two unions that had endorsed Reagan in the 1980 elections. Their "reward"? Permanent dismissal, blacklisting, seizure of the union treasury and union decertification. Four leaders were jailed, convicted of felonies — striking against the government — fined and stripped of their civil rights. So much for "democracy" and a "friend in the White House."

Ten thousand military air controllers were hired to replace them (only 846 were allowed to return).

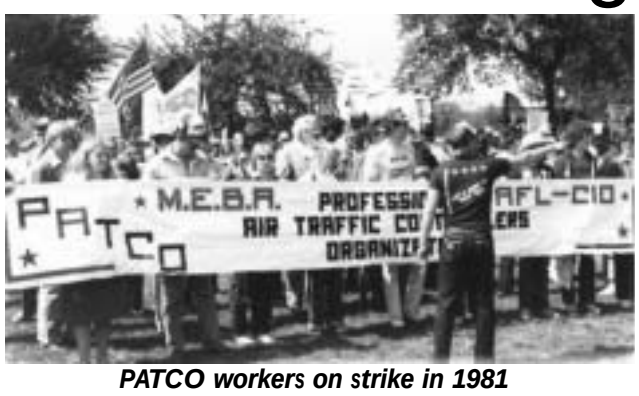
Such a fascist attack could not have happened without the complete cooperation of the sellouts that ran the AFL-CIO. Had the pilots, mechanics, baggage handlers and flight attendants refused to cross the PATCO picket lines, the entire airline industry would have been shut tight, and it wouldn't have been so easy for Reagan to get 150,000 workers to replace them.

But at the very moment that Reagan was announcing the firing, United Auto Workers union president Douglas Fraser, at the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Chicago, was denouncing the strike, declaring that "it could do massive damage to the labor movement." (This was the same Fraser that used 1,000 goons, many of them KKK members from UAW Local 22, to bust the first sit-down strike in auto since the 1930's when in 1973 PLP led a shutdown of Chrysler's Detroit Mack Avenue plant over safety issues.)

What *did* do "massive damage" was these labor fakers' ordering all other airline workers to cross the PATCO picket lines. One month later, 500,000 U.S. workers descended on Washington in a Solidarity Day demonstration, but the AFL-CIO "leaders" had already given their definition of "solidarity" by helping Reagan crush this strike.

Prior to this, workers who crossed picket lines were universally labeled scabs. Now the term "replacement worker" came into fashion. Instead of fighting this strike-breaking maneuver, the labor "leaders" sought — unsuccessfully — to get Democratic-controlled Congresses to ban it. So much for relying on "friends" in Washington.

While this class collaboration had been preceded by mass layoffs resulting from the attack on NYC workers in the 1975 "fiscal crisis" — under Democratic Mayor Abe Beame, and later the Democratic president Carter's government bailout of Chrysler — the 1981 strike-breaking of PATCO marked an even more decisive turn down the road of mass layoffs, huge pay cuts, billions in concessions in auto, steel and other basic industries, and destruction of social welfare programs. This continues now with the layoffs and pay cuts at GM, Ford and Delphi.



PATCO workers on strike in 1981

From 1950 to 1980, major strikes averaged 300 per year. Since 1980 that average has sunk to 46. In 1955, the AFL-CIO had 15 million members; now it has only 6 million. Only 7.8% of private sector workers are in unions now, the lowest percentage in 105 years.

The U.S. ruling class faces a crisis at home and abroad. Internationally, China is becoming a leading threat to U.S. imperialism, while the latter's drive to control Middle East oil supplies — necessary for its world domination — are leading it into the quagmires of Iraq and Afghanistan, killing tens of thousands of workers along the way, not to mention those of working-class GI's.

Corporations that must seek maximum profits to compete with their rivals cannot but help grind down the working class on behalf of the bosses' "bottom line," and their labor lieutenants are greasing their path. By defending the capitalist profit system in an era of growing fascism, these labor misleaders must inevitably sell out the working class. There's no more room for even temporary reforms. So the PATCO strike-breaking ushered in an intense attack on the entire working class.

Now the bosses are increasingly super-exploiting immigrant workers as well as using them as cannon fodder for their troop-short imperialist armies. But a labor "leadership" saturated for decades with racism — not having fought the mass layoffs in the basic industries in which the bulk of the victims were the "last-hired" black workers — is in no position to win the rank and file to fight anti-immigrant racism.

The after-effects of the PATCO strike-breaking and the class collaboration of the labor misleaders cry out for anti-racist red leadership of the working class. Militant and class conscious workers should join PLP to lead this fight against the bosses. We must up the ante of class struggle beyond the level of reforms — which, if forced to grant, the bosses can use their state power to always take away, as with PATCO. We must turn these struggles into schools for communism, winning workers to understand that only a communist revolution can solve this eternal problem of being on the losing side of the never-ending treadmill of capitalism.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to smash capitalism — wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead:" capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. Capitalism returned to the Soviet Union and China because socialism failed to wipe out many aspects of the profit system, like wages and division of labor.

Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism — the dictatorship of the proletariat. This fight requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One International working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. **Join Us!**

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When Wages Fall and Profits Rise, It's Capitalism

The way the capitalist economy functions never fails to prove what Karl Marx, the founder of communism, discovered over a century ago and what every worker knows in her or his gut: the capitalist class's profits come from the working class's labors. The latest figures (all quotes from NY Times, 8/28) clearly demonstrate this and show how capitalism is divided into two classes: workers and those who profit from them. They also show how the bosses continually drive workers' wages down to increase their profits. Consider:

• "Wages and salaries now make up the lowest share of the nation's gross domestic product [GDP] since…1947" when the government first started compiling this data. Meanwhile, "corporate profits have climbed to their highest share since the 1960's," producing "the golden era of profitability," according to the UBS investment bank.

• "The most important contributor to higher profit margins over the past five years has been a decline in labor's share of national income," says Wall Street's Goldman Sachs' economists.

• Since 2001, the "growing share of the economy to go to companies instead of workers' paychecks" has cost the working class $660 BILLION, stolen by the bosses directly from workers' labors.

The Times reports that the U.S. is in "the first sustained period of growth since World War II that fails to offer a prolonged increase in real wages for most workers." Why? Because as hourly wages for U.S. workers have decreased since 2003, "productivity — the amount that an average worker produces in an hour…— has risen steadily over the same period." In other words, workers are working harder for lower wages, so — surprise — profits are skyrocketing.

On top of this is capitalism's racism which produces super-profits for the bosses by paying black and Latino workers even less, lowering all workers' wages — a condition which the pro-capitalist union hacks help to maintain by their defense of the profit system.

In a clear description of the existence of two antagonistic classes, the Times quotes political analyst Charles Cook as pointing to "two economies out there…" He says that one of these economies serves "the people who have benefited from globalization,…greater productivity and higher corporate earnings."

"And then there's the working stiffs who just don't feel they're getting ahead despite the fact that they're working very hard. And there are a lot more people in that group than the other group."

As Marx pointed out, when workers put in 8 hours on the job, the value produced in the first few hours covers their wages; the rest of the shift produces profits for the boss. The harder the boss can force the worker to work, and therefore the more value the worker produces, the less time it takes for the worker to produce the value of his or her wage and therefore the more value (profit) goes into the boss's pocket. Marx called this the surplus value produced by the workers for the bosses.

As the bosses find themselves hard-pressed to pay out $8 billion a month to carry out their war in Iraq and protect their control of oil supplies in the Middle East, the tighter the squeeze they are driven to force upon workers at home (not to mention the more workers, Iraqis and GI's, they kill in the process).

The only solution is a society with ONE class, the class that produces all value, the working class. When the working class controls what value they produce and how they produce it, we will be able to distribute resources according to need instead of allowing a small group to steal the value produced by our sweat. When workers control production they will be able to make decisions based on the common good, rather than on constantly increasing profits in the face of competition. That's communism. Only revolution can eliminate the horrors of capitalist exploitation and endless imperialist wars. Join PLP and fight for it.✪

World War III

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aircraft carrier in the Taiwan Strait on June 2, 2013). Korea, the Caspian region and the Mid-East are just as probable. But we can say with deadly certainty that imperialist rivalry, inherent in the profit system, slaughtered hundreds of millions in the 20th Century and stands to outdo that horror in the 21st.

...COMMUNIST SOLDIERS AND WORKERS CAN FINISH IT

Ultimately, victory and defeat in war are determined not by technology but by politics, the motivation of those who do the actual fighting. The main ideas motivating soldiers in all armed struggles today are reactionary and anti-working-class: racism, nationalism and religion. This situation will not last. As the horrors of imperialist carnage increase, opportunities will increase for our Party to win workers, soldiers, and sailors to revolutionary communism, the only outlook worth fighting for.✪

Class Struggle Amid Growing Fascism in Oaxaca Strike

OAXACA, MEXICO, Sept. 2 — The three-month-old strike of 70,000 teachers and other school workers by Section 22 of the Education Workers' Union has become a mass political movement. It has fought the Mexican bosses' attacks on the education system and also demanded the resignation of Mexico's fascist governor, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz (URO). After the workers defeated the police forces that URO sent on June 14 to remove the strikers and their supporters from their Central Plaza encampment, hundreds of thousands of workers, particularly those in mass organizations, joined the struggle.

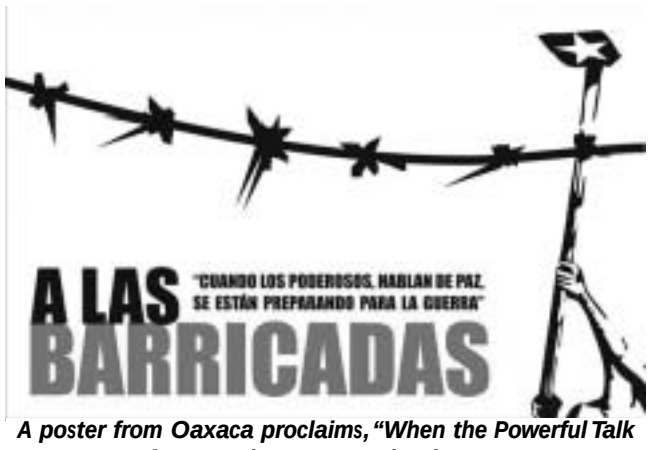
To coordinate this mass movement, the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca has been organized and has basically taken over the city, including temporarily controlling several radio stations. Government offices are not functioning, the tourist center of the city is now an encampment where thousands of teachers and their supporters are living. Many businesses, hotels and restaurants are closed. Oaxaca, one of the hemisphere's oldest colonial cities, has streets strewn with burnt-out cars and blocked with rocks or burning tires. In the dark of night, police and fascist paramilitary units use selective repressive tactics and witch-hunts to kidnap, jail, torture and murder teachers and other workers. This isn't Beirut or Baghdad, it's Oaxaca, Mexico, another vaunted "democratic" wonderland of U.S. imperialism.

Unable to stem the relentless and rising militancy of the teachers and the popular movement, the Mexican bosses and the PRI's (Revolutionary Institutional Party's) state governor have declared a "dirty war" on the workers of Oaxaca. Besides using the Federal Preventive Police and other agents, the rulers are freeing ruthless prisoners and sending them into their death squads to execute brutal mass repression.

The Oaxaca teachers' refusal to passively accept the assault on their living standards and the bosses' fascist attempt to impose it, endangers the Mexican bosses' and their U.S. imperialist masters' plans for the near future. At stake in this struggle are not only the teachers' and other workers' reform demands, but also the fight among the Mexican and U.S. bosses over the privatization of the state-owned oil company PEMEX. Mexico's bosses seek control over some of these profits and of electrical energy (CFE), education, water and historical centers. They also want to establish Plan Puebla Panama, an industrial belt from Panama to Puebla. All the bosses' electoral parties are directly or indirectly involved in this fight.

The class struggle is sharpening here and nationwide. The big bosses, along with opportunist politicians, are trying to manipulate the workers and their allies to get behind their various capitalist/imperialists interests. The current demands for the resignation of the PRI Governor and to improve the schools still leaves the capitalist system intact, with its deepening brutal exploitation, repression and racism.

Oaxaca's workers have gotten a taste of their potential power. It's a shining example for workers worldwide. But fighting for reforms alone, no matter how militantly, will never solve our problems. PLP is trying to show workers that this situation can and must be converted into a workers' struggle for power through the long-term fight for communism.



A poster from Oaxaca proclaims, "When the Powerful Talk of Peace, They're Preparing for War"

By winning workers to grasp their potential to run society in our class's interests, PLP can help create the conditions to achieve the goal of building a communist society that can meet workers' needs. Our communist press, study groups and actions must reach as many workers, students and farm workers as possible. With this outlook, we call on all workers to organize support for the struggle in Oaxaca and condemn the attacks on the teachers and their supporters. (See airport workers letter, page 6) We call on workers to join and build a massive international Progressive Labor Party capable of emancipating the working class worldwide from capitalism and imperialism.✪

LA Workers Oust Racist and Attack Mayor's War Agenda

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 23 — Over 3,000 city workers — members of the Engineers and Architects Assn. — held a two-day strike to demand higher wages and benefits. Mayor Villaraigosa "offered" between zero and 2% increases. The union leaders had no serious plan nor even tacit support from other LA unions.

But the dead-end tactics and politics of the union leaders are only part of the story. The other part is that many of these strikers eagerly took CHALLENGE and a PLP leaflet. They expressed anger at the supposedly "progressive" Mayor who is cutting all City services while spending more money on jails, surveillance, police and City Council salaries.

Many agreed that the Democrats, like Villaraigosa, are just as pro-war as the Republicans — with different tactics. Recently Villaraigosa spoke at an Israeli consulate rally, supporting that fascist government's attack on the Lebanese people. Coupled with his support of the Iraqi war means Villaraigosa cannot support the workers of Los Angeles or anyplace else, no matter what his rhetoric.

Workers had a sign listing the Mayor's crimes. Many agreed with PL'ers that his support of both wars is his biggest crime. Villaraigosa was co-chairman of Kerry's 2004 platform committee for the Democratic National Committee when he helped ensure that nothing was said opposing the U.S. war in Iraq.

One woman picket was holding a racist sign stating that the Mayor has no money for City workers but plenty for "illegal aliens." A PL'er asked a striker why that sign was permitted. After looking for the picket captain, the striker, already angry about the sign, confronted the woman, telling her the sign was not welcome because it divided the workers. Another worker who was picketing yelled at the racist, "The workers are one class!" Other strikers joined in and took the racist sign from the woman.

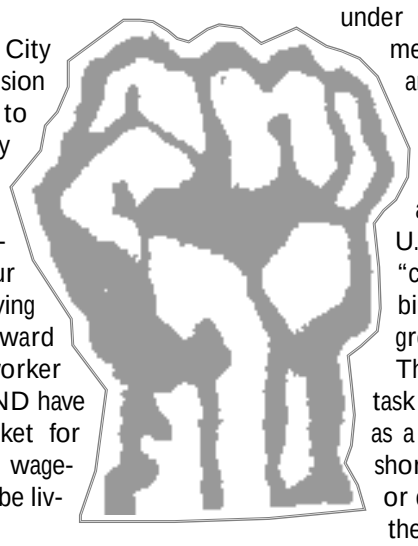
A PL'er said the sign was also a lie. The source of the cuts isn't immigrants — it's the war, Homeland Security and the capitalist system. The worker who yelled at the racist said he used to read CHALLENGE 30 years ago and was glad to see it again. The strikers thanked the PL'ers and took papers.

Many of these strikers were born here while others are immigrants from around the world. They were all angry, very open to our communist newspaper and to discussing the source of the attacks on them — a good sign.✪

Hotel Workers' Class Interest Not Just 'Bread and Butter'

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 31 — Hotel workers in the LA airport (LAX) area are fighting for union recognition and a contract to improve wages, benefits and working conditions for the mostly-immigrant workforce. But union president John Wilhelm (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees — HERE) is turning this struggle from a fight against the hotel bosses to an alliance with them for "Immigration Reform" which will do more harm than good to the workers he supposedly represents. The lesson for all workers: We need to build revolutionary consciousness, not depend on the business unionism of these misleaders who defend the bosses' profit system.

Hundreds of LAX hotel workers, together with other hotel workers and supporters, have been organizing inside the hotels and marching in the streets. Wilhelm used this to pressure the Beverly Hills-based Hilton Corporation to agree to "card-check neutrality," meaning management won't try to stop workers from signing union cards, and will recognize the union as bargaining agent when a majority have signed. This will directly affect 18 Hilton sites nationally where HERE is trying to win bargaining rights, but not locally-owned ones like those at LAX and Glendale.



Meanwhile, on September 18 the LA City Council will consider a proposed extension of the LAX "living-wage" ordinance to major employers in the Century Boulevard Corridor, including the large hotels. Wilhelm is counting on this to avert a strike. But the ordinance mandates a wage of slightly over $10/hour while giving employers the option of paying only $8.78/hour and $1.25/hour toward health benefits. A full-time hotel worker would still make under $18,000/year AND have to pay $100's per month out-of-pocket for health insurance. With TWO full-time wage-earners, an LA family of four would still be living in poverty.

Wilhelm brags that Hilton has agreed to cooperate with HERE to promote immigrants' rights and "immigration reform." HERE's new "American Dream" campaign raised this demand — after Hilton had already agreed to it! This really means supporting the U.S. Senate's "comprehensive" immigration bill (Hagel-Martinez) aimed at "securing" (militarizing) the U.S.-Mexico border and controlling the flow of immigrant labor, corresponding to the bosses' needs. The "path-to-citizenship" provisions — including those that would push immigrant youth into the military — are designed to make immigrant workers feel that "We are America."

John Wilhelm and his City Council friends are not even fighting for "bread and butter" but for crumbs, when workers need to fight for the whole "bakery" — for workers' power.

The real struggle here is the bosses' political fight to win immigrant workers' loyalty to the imperialist system that exploits and terrorizes them. It's a struggle between the bosses' U.S. nationalism (patriotism) and revolutionary working-class consciousness.

John Wilhelm, a Yale graduate who's never worked in a hotel, is a key player. As chairman of the AFL-CIO committee on immigration from 1999 until 2005, Wilhelm put the labor federation "on board" with the liberal imperialist policy of "comprehensive reform" and a "path to citizenship."

Wilhelm was then appointed in May 2005 to the "Independent Task Force on Immigration and America's Future," organized by three bosses' Institutes. This Task Force included Senators Kennedy and McCain, former and current heads of the Immigration Service (now under the Dept. of Homeland Security), members of the Carnegie Endowment and a chief of the National Restaurant Association, the trade organization directly responsible for exploiting many members of his HERE union — all this hardly "independent" of the U.S. ruling class! The Kennedy-McCain "comprehensive immigration reform" bill (forerunner of Hagel-Martinez) grew directly out of this task force.

The capitalists use their institutes and task forces to make policy for their class as a whole, even when it contradicts the short-term interests of some businesses or even industries. On the opposing side, the international working class needs one party, the Progressive Labor Party, to move forward in the interest of OUR whole class and build the long-term fight to destroy imperialism with communist revolution. As we build concrete support for hotel workers fighting their bosses in LA and dozens of other cities, we need to expand the distribution of this newspaper, CHALLENGE-DESAFIO, so that more and more workers can join the revolutionary struggle for workers' power.✪

Racist Bosses Turn Katrina into Fascist Carnage

In the year since hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, the bosses' local, state and national governments have turned a capitalist disaster into a fascist outrage. That is the inherent result of a system based on racism and war. U.S. rulers have refused to commit the resources to rebuild New Orleans, but have concentrated on keeping most displaced workers in exile and harassing and attacking those who have courageously returned.

A year ago, working-class neighborhoods were flooded out when levees that had repeatedly been declared inadequate failed to stem the hurricane's force. Workers were given 24 hours to evacuate. Those with no independent means of transportation were forced to stay behind and suffer without food, water and sanitary facilities. The bosses' previous refusal to fund the reinforcement of levees (while billions were "found" for imperialist oil war in Iraq) led to this failure to meet the most basic needs of workers and turned a hurricane into an on-going disaster. That's capitalism.

One year later the bosses continue to attack the workers here, refusing to allow the poorest, mostly black workers to move back into their communities. Residents of the Lafitte and Iberville Projects have had their windows and doors sealed with steel plates and caged in with a barbed-wire fence. Workers whose homes were destroyed by 20 feet of flood-water have been given unrealistic deadlines for houses to be repaired or else be bulldozed. These workers are deliberately being prevented from returning so that the bosses can replace workers' houses with casinos and high-income homes and apartments, all to benefit real estate speculators.

Increased fascism is the major tactic for keeping workers out and terrorizing those looking to return. Jet fighters fly overhead during the day while police helicopters carry out surveillance at night. Military police harass workers. The Blackwater security force — the same thugs being used in Iraq — has been hired to protect the bosses' private property in and around the Ninth Ward, making it clear that residents are not welcome to return. The bosses' vicious response stems from their fear workers will revolt against racist exploitation. The face of fascism is ugly and clear in New Orleans!

Trying to defeat working-class unity, the bosses have introduced a "guest-labor" program, with immigrant workers brought in to work for as little as $18 a week. Black workers here lost homes and were denied adequate relief funds. Now the bosses won't hire them at decent wages to rebuild their own city, another inevitable product of capitalism's racism.

This fight for jobs has created a racist, hostile environment that the ruling class needs and wants. Most workers are treated like prisoners penned up in barbed-wire-fenced trailer parks with security checkpoints for poor black and white residents or concentration-camp-style housing for immigrant workers. These workers need multi-racial, revolutionary communist ideology to recognize that the bosses, not each other, are the real enemy.

The many organizations in the city helping residents gut homes and move back into their communities only seek to reform capitalism, not to replace it with a system without racism and exploitation. PLP'ers volunteered to gut houses as well, but we also discussed racism, sexism, imperialist war and class consciousness with local residents and other volunteers. All comrades who participated in the New Orleans Summer Project displayed great collective leadership and total dedication to the working class.

Hundreds of CHALLENGE-DESAFIOS were distributed to workers at the oil refinery, in the remaining housing projects and to the super-exploited day-laborers. Most who accepted the paper strongly agreed with what we had to say, stating that they've always known the capitalist system was the problem.

We will continue to raise communist ideas in this ravaged city because the bosses are nowhere near finished terrorizing its workers, anymore than they're about to end their imperialist war in the Middle-East. The volunteers who've joined with workers trying to reclaim their homes are showing the selflessness that is the foundation of communist cooperation. We must seize on this example and on the workers' anger and build a movement aimed at destroying this profit system that turned a hurricane into ongoing fascist oppression.✪

NEW ORLEANS SUMMER

Workers Have Militant Anti-Racist History

New Orleans workers have given our class some amazing stories of multi-racial working-class unity. In the fight to return and rebuild after Hurricane Katrina, much can be learned from this history.

An 1865 united strike of black and white waterfront workers terrified New Orleans' bosses, who fought this unity with racism and violence. During the 1873 depression, Democrats called on New Orleans bosses to "give preference to white over black labor." Starting in 1877, hundreds of black workers in Louisiana were tortured and lynched by mobs instigated by white landlords and bosses.

In 1887 the Knights of Labor organized a strike of nearly 10,000 Louisiana sugar workers (90% black). The state militia fired on the strikers, murdering 30 and wounding hundreds.

Then in November 1892 the New Orleans waterfront again exploded when thousands of teamsters, packers, and scalemen — black and white — organized a "Triple Alliance" demanding union recognition. Following their lead, other workers also organized bi-racial unions — usually separate black and white locals working together. The more advanced locals were multi-racial. Twenty-five thousand other workers — from railway porters to musicians — joined in an eleven-day general strike, one of the largest in U.S. history.

The bosses' furious race-baiting failed to break the strikers' unity, but the strike ended under the threat of federal military intervention. The militant, but reformist, trade-union movement was not prepared to confront the bosses' state power. And the cotton union leaders (black and white) became the bosses' junior partners. They refused to shut down this key economic sector, crippling the general strike and sending it down to defeat. Workers bitterly denounced this treachery, but in the absence of anti-capitalist political leadership they were unable to respond effectively.

New Orleans workers were also sidetracked by the Populist Party's electoral politics. Initially challenging both Democrats and Republicans at the polls with an interracial alliance of workers and farmers, the Populists soon decided to ally with the "lesser-evil" Republicans and quickly caved in to racism.

Thus, in the mid-1890's, the bosses used racism to divide and then smash the dockworkers' unions. They provoked white workers into an anti-black strike, then imposed wage-cuts and work-rule changes that hurt white workers as well as black. Meanwhile, Homer Plessy's brave effort to desegregate New Orleans streetcars was crushed by the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson which said that the U.S. Constitution permitted segregation. Another terrible racist riot in 1900 took a large toll among black workers.

Still, by 1902, the cotton unions had begun to rebuild interracial unity around demands that guaranteed a significant proportion of jobs for black workers, though the rules still favored whites.

When the interracial Brewery Workers Union was expelled from the openly racist AFL in 1907 they struck. Black waterfront locals supported them, along with some white labor delegates. Later that year, black and white workers together shut down the entire port for three weeks, winning many of their reform demands.

(Next issue: the emergence of the Industrial Workers of the World.)

Workers and Youth Ante Up, Now Need Revolutionary Politics

While the media portrays young people and workers as cynical, uncaring, even violent, tens of thousands of young people and workers, multi-racial, women and men, volunteered to help their brothers and sisters in New Orleans who were uprooted by the devastating policies of capitalism. They devoted their time, sweat and tears to gutting and rebuilding homes. They didn't do it for money or special treatment. They saw the abandoned ruins, the decay and the pain on workers' faces. They showed that workers and youth care about their class.

But it cannot end with just volunteerism.

Capitalism cannot be changed and disaster awaits the working class because the ruling class' main concern is profits and control of markets. Rebuilding houses is a band-aid on a bleeding wound that is killing our class. We need to develop a protracted struggle among workers and volunteers in New Orleans that includes: (1) Building class consciousness — the idea that we, black, Latin, Asian and white, are part of the exploited class of workers used by the international rulers; (2) Fighting racism and nationalism as the main ruling class tools to divide and conquer workers; (3) Winning workers to the communist Progressive Labor Party — an organization that mobilizes for a complete change of system, not built upon the exploitation of one class by another. Until then, any short-term victories our class manages to squeeze out of the bosses will be reversed. Participating in the class struggle, we can develop ideas and minds that will change the future.✪

U.S. Rulers' Education 'Reform Part of Plan for World Domination

(The previous article — August 2 — detailed the ruling class's liberal wing's division of labor among its various foundations, assigning specific aspects of "reforming" education directed at winning working-class parents to support its imperialist goals. These aspects include: training superintendents, senior administrators, teachers, school board members, parent groups, etc. The foundation sponsors and member include Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, GE, IBM and the presidents of the two teacher unions.)

The last time U.S. capitalism donned an anti-racist mask was to launch the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's, spurred by their rivalry with the Soviet Union. The masses in newly-independent African countries hated South Africa's apartheid, which they identified as a step-child of Jim Crow segregation in the southern U.S. Consequently, U.S. rulers found themselves becoming isolated in areas like the United Nations while their Soviet rival reaped the benefits.

The takeover of education is part of a deliberate class action involving co-coordinated Foundation grants, major corporate sponsorship and representatives of the US Armed Forces (in the form of retired generals, admirals and so on).

U.S. rulers responded with President Truman's order to end segregation in the Army and court decisions "declaring" the end of public school segregation. Once this integration movement was released, however, the anti-racist anger of black workers took hold and through "ghetto" rebellions, anti-racist militancy and strikes — in the Army and in industry — the entire working class began flexing its muscles.

Forced to retreat somewhat, the capitalists regrouped and then counter-attacked. Drugs and mass incarceration became their favored weapons, as U.S. rulers marched to their customary racist rhythm. The defeat of slavery had been followed by lynching and Jim Crow segregation. Now Jim Crow was replaced by mass imprisonment. A 1994 report titled "Cellblocks to Classrooms" noted, "...Society now spends about $2.8 billion to higher educate black males and $10 billion to lock them up."

Now this same capitalist class wants to drastically alter this trend. Driven by their bid to retain world "primacy" (as defined by the Rockefeller Council on Foreign Relations), they've taken direct control of K-12 education. A July 30th Los Angeles Times article calls Bill Gates "the nation's superintendent of schools!" It points out that "with the ability to handle more than $1 billion [every year]... the Gates Foundation looms larger than even the U.S. Department of Education, which by comparison, has only $20 million in truly discretionary funds."

Bill Gates is no Lone Ranger. The education takeover is part of a deliberate ruling-class action involving co-coordinated foundation grants, major corporate sponsorship and armed forces representatives (retired generals, admirals and so on). Its urgency hints at the desperation the leaders of U.S. imperialism sense about the world. On the one hand, they want to reverse the sharpening trade wars, which they're currently losing; on the other, they need to strengthen their military capabilities for the series of wars they project as necessary to maintain their "primacy" in Eurasia and that may well lead to world war.

In 2005, New York University issued an education report (funded by the Rockefeller Foundation) titled "With All Deliberate Speed." "According to the National Center on Education and the Economy," the report claimed, "by 2020, the US will need 14 million more college-trained workers than it will produce. Nowhere is college participation lower than among African-Americans and Hispanic youth; nowhere is the potential to meet our nation's needs for college graduates greater."

It continues: "If this nation is to defend its long-term vital interests, [they call it world "primacy"; we say "world domination" — Ed.] we will continue to need a large pool of well-educated people who wish to volunteer [especially if college debts will be forgiven? — Ed.] to serve their country. Yet each year 1.2 million of our students do not graduate from high school, the majority of whom are minority [black and Latin—ed.]. If this dropout rate continues unabated over the next ten years, a total of twelve million young people in America will be unable to serve in our armed forces."

It's clear: black and Latino college graduates are vital. The report continues: "The racial fragmentation of the American military in the Vietnam era had a profound impact on our nation's military leaders. As a result our military leaders have made a deliberate commitment in the past 30 years to create a diverse officer corps that is of the highest standards."

The generals may understand that racism is the Achilles' heel of U.S. imperialism, but affirmative action in their officer corps won't fix their problem. Anti-racism springs from a deep commitment to value and respect of all workers internationally. Imperialist armies inevitably march to destroy and subjugate the masses. Imperialist armies can't fly the flag of anti-racism with any conviction for long. They didn't in Vietnam, in Grenada or in Panama and they certainly aren't flying it in the Middle East.

On the other hand, communists champion both the education of the working class (workers can rule society) and the necessity to fight racism — without the unity of the world's workers we are nothing. Furthermore, whenever U.S. capitalists have donned anti-racist masks they have unleashed forces they're unable to control.

In the coming political storms we can expect new opportunities to advance the fight for communist revolution, especially among our youth. The generals might count on an extra twelve million young people "to serve in their [imperialist] armed forces"; we'll bet on recruiting an extra twelve million young people "to serve the working class" and build a new communist revolutionary movement.✪

The 'Cap and Gown' Road to War

Because capitalist wars are prepared in secret, it's easy to mis-read think-tank reports. When "With All Deliberate Speed" refers to U.S. industries projected need for 14 million college-trained workers by 2020, it conjures up more or less innocent images of commerce, trade and manufacturing. Coupled, however, with the International Association of Machinists' (IAM) Surge Report, it reveals the present K-12 education reforms as really war preparations.

"To President Franklin D. Roosevelt," the IAM report begins, "surge meant a 'swift and driving increase in our armament production.'" The report then outlines how the U.S.'s shrinking industrial base threatens its capabilities to meet military surge requirements:

- One-third of the bullets used in Afghanistan and Iran are made overseas.
- The U.S. can no longer manufacture main battle tanks.
- The tungsten used in M-16 bullets can be found only in China.
- The Swiss government recently refused to sell component parts to Honeywell because the Swiss did not agree with the U.S. military stance in Iraq.

Anyone wanting more details should Google IAMSurge. The point is, it's fatally easy to mis-read the deadly war intentions of U.S. imperialism.✪

There's No Ford in These Workers' Future

DETROIT, MI, August 18 — "You just have the feeling that all the air is going out of all four tires as well as the spare. You're in a time of discontinuity and a sea change is at hand," said James P. Womack, cofounder of the Lean Enterprise Institute. He was responding to Ford's slashing production by one-fifth for the final three months of the year, the deepest cuts since the 1980s.

Ten plants in the U.S. and Canada will close temporarily, affecting supplier plants and other auto-related businesses. Ford workers who have transferred to new plants from the recently closed St. Louis assembly plant are getting a chilling feeling of déjà vu. With rising gas prices, more than half the cuts will come from the F-series pick-up truck, which constitutes almost one-third of Ford's sales.

The production cuts come as Ford, GM and the UAW are eliminating over 60,000 jobs, closing more than two dozen plants and cutting billions of dollars in costs. Ford has already lost $1.5 billion this year. In July, Toyota passed Ford in monthly sales for the first time, to become the No. 2 auto company in the U.S. market (Ford is still ahead for the year). GM and Ford's combined U.S. market share sank to an all-time low, 52%, while Asian companies took 42%, their biggest share ever. Chrysler sales slid 37% from last year and GM sales dropped by 22%.

Mark Fields, president of Ford's Americas group, said the battle for the U.S. market is now among the Global Six; GM, Ford, Chrysler, Toyota, Honda and Nissan. Currently U.S. bosses are retreating while Asian bosses take the offensive. Tens of thousands of autoworkers are being given a check and then thrown overboard by the UAW to keep the U.S. bosses afloat. If they survive the fall they'll find themselves standing on line with thousands more for $10-an-hour jobs.

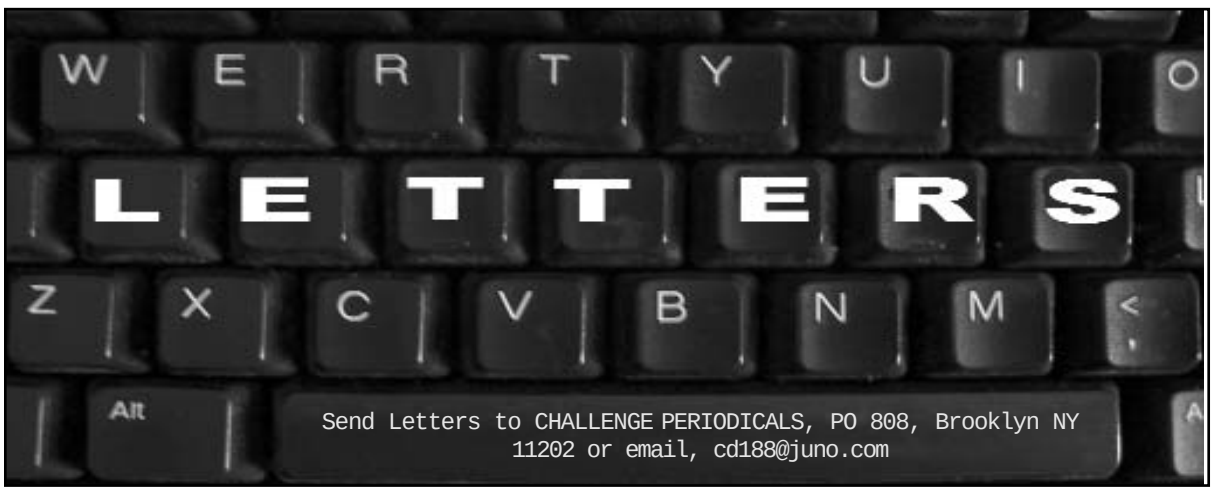
Ultimately, the inter-imperialist rivalry for markets, resources and cheap labor can only be resolved through world war. The bosses must rely on the very workers they are brutally attacking to pull this off. That is the contradiction they cannot resolve. But we can. We can't stop the fascist bloodletting of jobs and healthcare, but we can consolidate and expand a base for PLP among auto workers. We can unite with workers in supplier plants, Toyota, Honda, Hyundai, VW and more, here and worldwide.

The auto bosses' global rivalry has brought the international working class much closer together. Steeled in struggle and building a mass base for CHALLENGE and PLP will prepare the leadership for workers to take power with communist revolution.✪

DETROIT AND GARY TEACHERS STRIKE

continued from page 8

Gary and Detroit have both been decimated by the struggle among international steel and auto bosses for markets, resources and cheap labor. The students are the children and grandchildren of retired steel workers who've had their pensions and health care stripped away, and of laid-off auto workers who are lining up for $10-an-hour jobs with no benefits. The teachers, if not their union leaders, are clearly on the side of their students. A permanent war budget has written these students off. To the bosses, they are cannon fodder at best. (More next issue.)✪



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Pro-Boss Union Hacks Help Dump 3,500 Workers

SABMiller, the German-based company operating in 40 countries acquired Bavaria Brewery, intensifying the attacks against the workers that had begun when Bavaria was solely owned by the multi-millionaire Santo Domingo family. It has pushed through a rotten contract because the sellout union leaders' passivity enabled the bosses to take advantage of the lack of a real union. Mass layoffs, unjustified sanctions against workers and ideological pressure led to constant persecution of the workers.

The union's executive committee did everything possible to curtail any workers' fight-back, leaving them at the mercy of company fascism. The hacks sold their souls for a few crumbs for themselves, including loans from Bavaria, for their cooperation. According to rank-and-filers, one hack even got a commission for every sold-out worker! Now the company is trying to decertify the union altogether.

Workers are paying dearly after years of producing profits for Bavaria. One worker with cancer of the eye was fired and now has no pension. Other workers suffer horrible conditions until the company decides they're no longer needed. Meanwhile, the judicial system completely supports Bavaria — 95% of all cases brought to the labor court are settled in the bosses' favor, bankrupting the losing workers.

Again, the bosses' state serves the capitalists, not the workers. Workers can expect only state terror in this bosses' dictatorship. Over several years, 3,500 Bavaria workers have lost their jobs through the collaboration among the company, their lawyers and judges and the union hacks. We're now part of the army of the unemployed, without a regular wage, forced to become street vendors to try to make ends meet. Many of these workers have died of heart attacks and even committed suicide, leaving families in total misery.

That is what capitalism has brought to hundreds of millions of workers worldwide in this age of endless wars and growing fascism. The billions Clinton and Bush sent to the Colombian army and government to fight "narco-trafficking" have been used to attack workers. More drugs are produced now in Colombia than before Plan Colombia began in the mid-1990's.

We in PLP are fighting the passivity and demoralization of many workers here. We're using CHALLENGE-DESAFIO to bring them our communist politics, emphasizing the need to smash capitalism and struggle for a society without bosses — communism. That's the road for workers to battle for their class interests and against all their tormentors.

COMRADE IN COLOMBIA

Airport Workers Back Oaxaca Strikers

Revolutionary greetings from a group of airport workers in a major U.S. city. Because of fascist Homeland Security we cannot say where we work. We're from the US, Mexico, Central America and Africa, readers and distributors of CHALLENGE, where we learned about your struggle. The news media makes no mention of your 70,000-teacher strike, or the 300,000 supporters who have defended the movement against the police. They purposely black out the largest strike in North America because they fear the example you might set for workers here.

We're sad to hear of the police murder of our brothers and sisters. Many black and Latino families here have suffered at the hands of the police as well. You are all heroes for fighting back against the government and their killer cops.

At our airport, most of us are new CHALLENGE readers and learning about communism. We like many things in the paper and have some disagreements and many questions. But we urge you to seek out the PLP in Oaxaca. If anyone can help you, they can.

Your struggle is an inspiration to workers worldwide. We have sent a resolution to our union supporting your strike. Fight on brothers and sisters!

A GROUP OF AIRPORT WORKERS

Evil, Yes; Lesser, No

An editorial on the Sept. 6 CHALLENGE front page refers to "Vietnam War criminal Lyndon Johnson who ran against pro-war Barry Goldwater" in warning that "lesser-evil" liberals are many times even more dangerous than outright reactionaries.

In the 1964 presidential elections, the liberals were falling all over Democrat Johnson as the candidate who would "save" us from the Republican Goldwater's "finger on the nuclear trigger." The Democrats ran an ad — since selected as the "best" political ad of all time — which first depicted two little 3-year-old toddlers holding hands while walking into a sun-drenched forest, followed by the scene of a huge atomic mushroom cloud. The implication was clear: vote for Johnson and our children's future is secure; vote for Goldwater and all you'll get is war.

Johnson won in a landslide, and what happened? The 16,000 "advisors" Kennedy had sent to Vietnam was upped to a half million by Johnson. Based on the Johnson administration's "report" that North Vietnamese "gunboats" had attacked U.S. ships in the Tonkin Gulf off Vietnam's coast, the so-called Tonkin Gulf resolution swept through Congress authorizing Johnson to launch all-out war against the Vietnamese. (Shades of Congressional authorization for Bush's invasion of Iraq!) But as it later turned out, the Tonkin Gulf "incident" was an outright lie. There had never been any attack.

The upshot was nearly 10 years of war, three million Vietnamese killed, 58,000 dead U.S. soldiers, tens of thousands wounded, napalming of civilians, blatant massacres of Vietnamese women and children, carpet bombing of North Vietnam — U.S. aircraft dropped more bombs on Vietnam than were used in all of World War II! — Vietnamese forests "defoliated" by U.S. Agent Orange. For decades afterwards thousands of U.S. soldiers developed cancer and many died from the effects of Agent Orange, while thousands of their children were born deformed.

In April 1965, Johnson ordered over 30,000 Marines to invade the Dominican Republic when a popular uprising was aimed at toppling a corrupt murderous military Junta. In 1967, about to order the 82nd Airborne to Vietnam, instead Johnson ordered them to "invade" Detroit to crush an anti-racist rebellion against police terror.

Johnson did exactly what the liberals were warning Goldwater "would do" if he became president. So much for the fraudulent electoral "solution" of voting for the liberal "lesser evil."

OLD-TIME PL'ER WHO REMEMBERS

Reforms Won't Beat Fascism, Only Reds Will

In a discussion with some friends who believe in reforms I explained why I dismissed reformism and embraced revolutionary communism. I said I supported communism not only because it's a better idea but also because in the absence of a communist revolution, fascist barbarism would prevail, inciting genocide against Jews and black workers. This is not a prophecy but a position based on the study of history.

I said the failure of a workers' revolution in Germany had opened the door to Nazism. The fact that vendors at the Clearfield, Pa. County Fair had been selling KKK and Nazi items and that blatant racists were enlisting in the armed forces to receive military training for a race war in the U.S. shows these guys are dead serious. The only real way to defeat fascism was to build a mass communist movement. Forget about liberal-reformist peace rallies which accomplish nothing. Fascism is growing here. To deny it is to capitulate to it. I think they definitely were considering what I had to say.

RED COAL

Trial by Fury Hits Bosses' Courts

"Getting arrested is the easy part," commented one of my co-defendants back in the summer of 2005. "The hard part is waging a struggle around the case." He was referring to the trial of three anti-racists who were declared not guilty for having defended the rights of immigrant day-laborers in Farmingville, NY. That victory taught some important lessons for myself and others.

First, we should always try to fight the bosses and their fascist court system. During the case, some people suggested that we take the easy way out by accepting a bad deal, which the District Attorney quickly withdrew. However we developed a defense committee, raised funds and brought the case up on our jobs, in our unions and other mass organizations, and among circles of friends and families. This seemed like a more difficult road to travel, but ultimately we saw it as the only way. Instead of building cynicism among the defendants and within PLP, we learned about expanding limits and turning a bad thing (getting arrested) into a good thing — winning our friends and co-workers to fight against fascism, using the strength of the collective.

This trial is just one example of the increased ruling-class intimidation of the working class. Being fearful means understanding how hard the bosses will fight to preserve their system. However, *surrendering to this fear is our worst enemy*. Taking the offensive meant confronting our fears and helping to lead the Progressive Labor Party and our friends and families. There was nothing like being a co-defendant and witnessing, day after day, a courtroom filled with comrades, friends and family members (not to mention those waiting in the hallway for the next available seat). It takes a lot of people in many different places, working collectively, to develop such consistency.

Finally, we never know who we'll meet as we fight and reach out to the working class. A previous CHALLENGE article mentioned someone from an immigrant rights group who urged us to keep up the fight because she understands that the attacks against immigrant workers will only get worse. Two weeks later she called to tell us that the Suffolk County Police Department had falsely arrested 21 immigrant workers affiliated with a local and very active immigrant rights organization. She invited us to a picnic which was very spirited; workers were cordial and sympathetic to our recent struggle. She introduced me as one of the co-defendants in the Farmingville case and explained, "We have a lot to learn from these guys." Some workers, including a NYC transit worker, took copies of CHALLENGE. We're looking forward to continuing the struggle against fascism and deepening our ties with workers everywhere.

FARMINGVILLE DEFENDANT

CORRECTION:

In an article in the September 6th issue about Chicago cops shooting a 14 year old, the headline said the teenager was killed despite the fact that the first paragraph reported he was in critical condition. Actually, he is still alive.

A Worker's Questions Spark A Communist Response

After a long night in our noisy factory, my friend Sarah and I went to talk in a nearby restaurant. We've done this before, but this time was somewhat more advanced politically. Sarah had seen CHALLENGE and we'd talked about revolution and the difference between socialism and communism. I thought she knew what PLP was about, but actually she didn't. While waiting for our food, she asked, "I know you said the Party has people around the world, but what exactly are you organizing for?"

Thinking before I spoke, I said we're organizing for revolution but we're not ready yet; we need more masses of workers won to the politics of communism. She thought this was a dream, but that didn't stop her from more questions.

"So how does it work? Is there a leader? What do you guys do?" No co-worker had ever asked such questions so directly. Seizing the opportunity, I replied, "Being a Party member means something different for each individual, depending on their work and commitment. There are leaders, and Party decisions are made by discussions in clubs and committees throughout the party so that everyone is involved in developing our political outlook. We think it's better to include everyone, rather than just listen to a few leaders."

"I feel kind of ignorant about these things," remarked Sarah. "I want to know more about your group. Do you think I have anything to offer to the Party?" Sarah teaches classes regularly in her church and has organized a system of rotations that started with no participation and is now at 80% in less than a year and a half, so her question surprised me. "Look at what you've done in your church," I said. "And remember the time we organized the shop to confront the manager last year? Most of those people would have never gone if I was the only one saying it. People respect you for your ideas and your actions."

"You know," she said, "I never thought of myself that way, but you're right."

"Sarah," I went on, "a lot of people told me the people in our shop would never come together, but they did because we worked together." This led me to explain that we all have different skills and when we team up we can become a more effective force. One conversation won't change her mind completely about revolution being a dream but something I told her seemed to make it slightly more attainable. "It's like setting up one of our machines at work. It may seem impossible sometimes but when we have the right tools, a good plan and the help of a friend, then we can do what we thought we couldn't."

This conversation with Sarah reflects the plan my club has been developing, starting with building relationships in our shops around communist ideas and CHALLENGE. We're trying to develop ourselves as leaders so over time people like Sarah will come closer to the Party as friends, eventually join and then help develop others to take the same path. It's important to find ways for our friends and recruits to play this role. They will discover skills they never thought they had and be encouraged to continue developing for future roles in organizing for PLP. Sarah is excited about our next event which we're organizing together, providing lessons to be learned and gains made.

Next Sarah must be won to a "school" we're organizing containing politics and teaching work skills. This will show her one way we work in the Party. A study group we're planning after that can help develop her political understanding. To reach these goals I plan to continue to bring communist politics to the forefront of our daily struggle with her and others.✪

> So how does it work?
> Is there a leader?
> What do you guys do?

Anti-Racists Confront Minutemen

continued from front page

silence the bullhorn but the students stood their ground and the nationalists backed off. A comrade's speech pointed to the Minutemen's U.S. flag as the flag of U.S. imperialism, while the Mexican flag represented the interests of the Mexican bosses who are killing teachers and their supporters in the mass struggle in Oaxaca. All bosses' flags stand for racism and exploitation. Only the red flag represents the working class worldwide in its fight for liberation from capitalism.

Militantly participating in the fight against anti-immigrant racism provides the opportunity to build revolutionary class-consciousness, teaching us to rely only on ourselves and our working-class brothers and sisters to fight for our interests, not on our most dangerous enemies — liberal politicians and nationalists.

At this demonstration the strength and importance of PL's leadership was clear. Had we not been there with the workers, many would have been swayed to go to the church. A close friend said, "Where else, and from whom, are workers going to hear these ideas?" Fighting the nationalists deepens the understanding of our friends that we need workers' internationalism and communist revolution.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT = New York Times, GW Guardian Weekly (UK) FT = Finacial Times

Lebanon: part of U.S. war plan for Iran

According to a Middle East expert with knowledge of the current thinking of both the Israeli and the U.S. governments, Israel has advised a plan for attacking Hezbollah — and shared it with Bush Adminstration officials well before the July 25th kidnappings….

"The White House was more focused on stripping Hezbollah of its missiles, because, if there was to be a military option against Iran's nuclear facilities, it had to get rid of the weapons that Hezbollah could use in a potential retaliation at Israel."

"The Israelis tolds us it would be a cheap war with many benefits," a U.S. government consultant with close ties to Israel said. "Why oppose it? We'll be able to hunt down and bomb missles, tunnels, and bunkers from the air. It would be a demo for Iran." (New Yorker, 8/21)

Israel cluster-bombs just before truce

The United Nations yesterday described as "shocking and immoral" the fact that Israel dropped over 90 per cent of its cluster munitions in Lebanon during the last three days of the conflict – when it was already clear there would be a cessation of hostilities….

102,000 unexploded small bombs continued to maim and kill people every day.

"Civilians will die disproportionately again, after the war….It's an outrage." (FT, 8/31)

Phony unions for China s Wal-Marts

The All-China Federation….in China ….In-house unions are established automatically…in many foreign enterprises such as Wal-Mart.

"Both sides will sit down to find the right person to head the union – there is no election….

China's unions are welcomed, unlike their militant counterparts in other countries, because they operate unashamedly as partners of the management rather than as the representative of labour.

"We will never take a simplistic measure like launching a strike…." (FT, 8/26)

9/11 Motive was U.S. policy, not religion

The most comprehensive examination of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, was conducted by the 9/11 commission….

Talking to the detainees….the staff found that religious orthodoxy was not a common denominator.…Instead, hatred of American foreign policy in the Middle East seemed to be the key factor….

"I believe they feel a sense of outrage against the United States….They identify with the Palestinian problem, they identify with people who oppose repressive regimes and I believe they tend to focus their anger on the United States." (NYT, 8/20)

Iranians know U.S. is no liberator

Iran's constitutional revolution of 1905-11 was a national struggle for democratic government….But its democratic roots were stamped upon by Reza Pahlavi, a soldier backed by the British….

Almost 30 years after Pahlavi crowned himself shah in 1925, the Iranian people had another go at establishing democracy. From 1951-53 they backed Mohammad Mossadeq…who nationalized the Iranian oil industry….

But this democratic experiment was again thwarted, this time after Kermit Roosevelt, grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt and …the Central Intelligence Agency's Middle East Division, backed by the British, engineered a coup to overthrow Mossadeq and put Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Reza Pahlavi's son, on the Peacock throne….

For Iranians, democracy is not a new idea but an ongoing struggle…twice stamped out by western powers….

George W. Bush's description of the US as "freedom-loving" is regarded as mere words….

Instead it is regarded in Iran as being in ruthless pursuit of its own interests, be those security of oil supplies or the promotion of its…arms program…. (FT, 8/31)

Capitalist China texts: No class struggle!

When high school students in Shanghai crack their history textbooks this fall they may be in for a surprise. The new standard world history text drops…Communist revolutions….

Socialism has been reduced to a single, short chapter in the senior high school history course. Chinese Communism before the economic reform that began in 1979 is covered in a sentence. The text mentions Mao only once — in a chapter on etiquette.

Nearly overnight the country's most prosperous schools have shelved the Marxist [framework] that has dominated standard history texts since the 1950's….

The French and Bolshevik Revolutions, once seen as turning points in world history, now get far less attention….

Some….speculated that the Shanghai textbooks reflected the political viewpoints of China's top leaders….

Mr. Jiang's "Three Represents" slogan aimed to broaden the Communist Party mandate and dilute its traditional emphasis on class struggle. (NYT, 9/1)

Hundreds of Millions, Not 'Great Men,' Created Science

Book Review: A People's History of Science, by Clifford D. Conner, Nation Books, New York, 2005.

Who built Thebes of the seven gates?
In the books you will find the names of kings.
Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?
Bertolt Brecht
"Questions From a Worker Who Reads"

Paying tribute to the history of world communism, PLP often says, "If we see this far, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants." This refers not only to the well-known individuals who founded our movement, but also to the tens of millions of unknown workers who fought for that movement. We stand on the shoulders of giants not only in the political arena, but in all areas of human knowledge, especially science. Communist theory developed from a scientific outlook, and most human progress depends on scientific discovery, so this is an important area to examine.

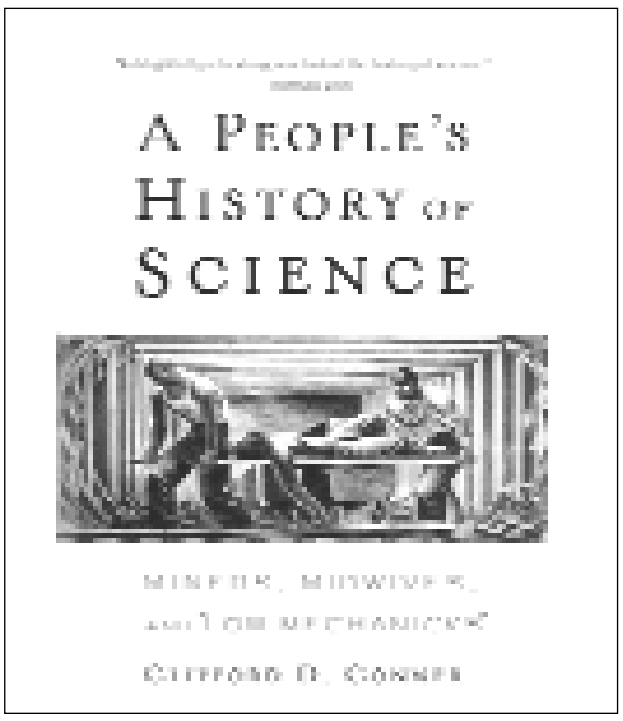
Conner describes this aspect of the history of science. Hundreds of millions of slaves, serfs and workers, over tens of thousands of years, who worked with both hands and brains, discovered and invented nearly everything that we take for granted today. They were craftsmen, artisans, engineers, toolmakers, blacksmiths, miners, peasants, sailors, midwives, healers, food gatherers, cooks, shepherds, and workers in literally thousands of other trades and professions.

Official science history says the "giants" are the "Great Men of Science" (virtually all said to be men) who worked mainly with their brains, and often on impractical projects. But the separation of manual and mental labor is a false notion created by ruling-class ideology. Everyone who works with their hands necessarily also works with their brains.

To their credit, some famous scientists, like Galileo, have acknowledged their debt to manual/brain laborers for the inventions and discoveries that formed the foundation of their own work (though most have claimed all the credit for themselves). However, science historians generally grant the intellectuals full credit for their incremental contributions, as though arising magically from isolated contemplation, and as though thousands could accomplish the task of hundreds of millions.

Conner guides us through practical work over the last several thousand years. Who, for example, invented the compass, printing press, spinning wheel, mechanical clock, suspension bridge, oil drilling techniques, steel, pottery, gunpowder, iron plow, ship rudder, agriculture, food preservation? Who discovered oxygen, algebra, decimal notation, navigation techniques? It was unnamed laborers, collectively, as this understanding was needed in their practical work. Yet particular — usually European — individuals are given the credit. Johann Gutenberg, for instance, is known as the inventor of the printing press. But movable type was invented over 400 years earlier, and the first iron printing press over 200 years earlier in China. In every case, Conner peels away the "great man" mythology to reveal realities of collective work by ordinary workers who helped create each famous discovery.

Prince Henry "the Navigator" of Portugal in the early 1400's is credited with finding ways of exploring the world by sea, but he was a notorious thief of techniques and knowledge possessed only by sailors. His countryman, Ferdinand Magellan, in the early 1500's, given credit for being the first person to sail around the world, relied on his navigator, a Filipino sailor named Enrique, whom he bought in a Malaysian slave market. And Magellan didn't even complete the journey, killed by Enrique's enraged



allies in the Philippines when they arrived there. When the English captain James Cook explored the South Pacific in the 1700's, he used Polynesian sailors who knew how to navigate to islands hundreds of miles away just by reading the wind, waves and ocean swells.

Conner also describes how the world's ruling classes have controlled what science is allowed to develop and how those discoveries are used. Over the ages, these rulers have stolen from the working classes not only our labor and our dreams, but even our contributions to the understanding of the universe and our inventions that drive their profits. He shows clearly that the rulers could not survive without the workers. The (unintended) value of Conner's work for revolutionaries is to help convince us, if we have any doubts, that the working class not only can run the world without the capitalists, but in fact has always created humanity's advances behind the scenes. ✪

DETROIT AND GARY TEACHERS STRIKE

AGAINST RACIST WAR BUDGETS

DETROIT, MI, September 5 — As we go to press, the strike of 9,500 teachers and other school workers in the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) against the Detroit Public Schools (DPS) system is in its second week. "It's not just the money we're striking for," said a Central High English teacher. "We don't have supplies we need to educate the students."

Meanwhile, at the annual Labor Day Parade here, the AFL-CIO leaders turned their backs on the teachers, never once offering support for their strike. They turned the event into a campaign rally for the Democratic Party, whose politicians on the School Board threatened the teachers with a strike-breaking injunction and huge fines. The union hacks' support for the Democrats puts them in head-on collision with the needs of the workers being victimized by those same Democrats.

The racist school bosses are demanding cuts of $88 million from teachers' salaries and benefits to cover a $105-million deficit. They rewarded administrators with raises and bonuses while DPS lost about 50,000 students over the last several years. The schools are in shambles while teachers dig into their own pockets to buy supplies and toilet paper for their students. According to the National Center of Education, Michigan graduated only 39% of black males during the 2003-2004 school year compared with 78% of white males. More than 80% of Detroit's 129,000 students are black; two-thirds live below the poverty line.

PARENTS, BUS DRIVERS BACK GARY STRIKERS

On September 1, more than 1,400 teachers and other school workers ended their one-week strike in Gary, Indiana. The school board vowed to break the strike, but parents supported the teachers and school bus drivers refused to cross the teachers' picket lines.

Teachers have been without a contract since December 2004, and had not struck since 1984. There are 16,000 students in the district, down from 22,000 a decade ago. Like Detroit, the students are overwhelmingly black and live in poverty.

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Bosses Plot to Gain Workers' Support for Bigger Wars

It's not every day the bosses reveal their goals and strategy so clearly. The latest issue of Foreign Affairs, mouthpiece of the rulers' premier think-tank, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), puts their cards on the table in a series of articles. The ruling class must be worried about U.S. imperialism's future.

In "What to Do In Iraq: A Roundtable," the magazine lays out big money's strategy for the coming period. Five foreign policy heavyweights contribute, including Leslie Gelb, former New York Times international columnist and past CFR president. Each contributor presents his own tactics, but all favor some variation of strategic "redeployment": a tactical retreat from Iraq to regroup for bigger and bloodier wars to protect the U.S. bosses' increasingly challenged grip on Mid-East oil.

"The Military's Manpower Crisis" by Frederick Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute starts by bemoaning the short supply of infantry soldiers, but ends with a twist. After criticizing the administration for neglecting recruitment and retention of ground troops in favor of expensive "transformational" weapons systems, Kagan concludes: "but simply killing the transformational programs would be unwise." Beefing up recruitment and financing fancy new weapons will be expensive, but "…the absolute size of the defense budget, its percentage of the total U.S. budget, and its share of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] are ultimately irrelevant. What matters is whether or not the money is sufficient to pay for the kind of military the United States needs in order to prevail in current and future conflicts." "Current conflicts" refer to immediate needs in the Middle East; "future conflicts" include wars with what the Pentagon calls "near peer competitors," like China and Russia with tacit support from many European nations.

The foreign policy gurus vent their frustration with the Bush regime in "The End of the Bush Revolution." They note, "…The Bush doctrine has run up against reality and become unsustainable." But not before, "…squandering U.S. legitimacy, breaking the domestic bank, and getting the United States bogged down in an unsuccessful war." They are particularly concerned that, "Washington now lacks the reservoir of … domestic support to pursue other key national interests."

New Liberalism Modeled on Old Liberalism s Anti-Communism

The front-page review of two books entitled "Authentically Liberal" by former U.N. representative Richard Holbrook offers a plan to regain this domestic support. CHALLENGE already described how one, "The Good Fight" by Peter Beinart, advocates a new liberalism to develop a racist "warrior culture." Beinart and Holbrooke use the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), organized in 1947, as an organizational model to build this new liberal warrior culture.

"These liberal anti-communists [of the ADA] provided the seminal thinking and political muscle during the most creative period of U.S. foreign-policy making in history," writes Holbrooke. "In addition to [Senator, Vice-president and Presidential candidate] Humphrey, the ADA's founding generation included Eleanor Roosevelt; [Kennedy administration historian and economist] Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. [and] John Kenneth Galbraith; [and] the great union leaders Walter Reuther and David Dubinsky…On domestic policy, members of the ADA were unabashed New Dealers…and on civil rights, they were well ahead of their time. But on foreign policy, the ADA members broke ranks declaring opposition to communism overseas, and its refusal to cooperate with communists at home. They altered American history and committed themselves to a new liberalism."

This "authentically liberal" plan reflects the bosses' imminent need to move support for bigger wars and aggressive U.S. imperialism from think-tanks to mass organizations and broader political acceptance in the working class. (Next issue: the implications of this strategy). ✪